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ABSTRACT

The document is a proposal for American Indian Studies (AIS) at Montana State University (MSU). The 7 Indian reservations in Montana remain isolated within the prevailing life-ways of the state, thereby becoming virtual economic, political, and social islands within its culture. Montana Indian education has been inexcusably low, with less than 200 college students from all reservations in a recent academic year against an estimated 4,000 Indian youths of college age in the state. MSU, as a land-grant institution, is in a unique position to help develop reservation resources through its programs in resident instruction, research, and extension. MSU can store, preserve, and help up-date tribal customs, practices and traditions. More specifically, AIS will seek to provide opportunities for the Indians to more fully utilize the resources of their land-grant university. For instance, MSU will work with Montana Indian tribes to establish personal liaison with tribes, and to gain assistance in building up specific knowledge about tribes. The proposal covers (1) proposal background; (2) problem; (3) proposed program; (4) objectives and goals; (5) program development; (6) curricula revision; (7) university consultants: philosophy; and (8) university consultants: functions. (FF)

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A PROPOSAL FOR AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES

AT

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Bozeman, Montana

February, 1971

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A PROPOSAL FOR INDIAN STUDIES AT MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

1. BACKGROUND

There are approximately 30,000 American Indians living on or near Federal Indian reservations in the State of Montana, which ranks sixth nationally in Indian population. The majority of Indians living on or near these reservations face critical problems, which are both immediate and of a long-standing nature. Some Montana Indians have left the reservations, and there are others who do not live on reservations; i.e., the non-reservation Indian communities at Great Falls and other locations. These communities generally share the critical deprivation and problems of the reservation Indian, and generalizations about Montana Indian situations will usually include all Indians in the state.

The seven Indian reservations in Montana remain isolated within the prevailing life-ways of the state, thereby becoming virtual economic, political, and social islands within its culture.

- ** The average per capita income of the Indians in Montana in 1969 was less than the accepted poverty levels for the nation.
- ** The average unemployment of the total available Indian labor force remains at more than 40% (44% during the last quarter of 1969 when national unemployment was at a low).
- ** Over 75% of all reservation Indian houses are rated inadequate for those families occupying them.
- ** The "Indian Estate" is decreasing (some reservations are now 58% in non-Indian ownership) and use of Indian lands by Indians was less than 20% on some reservations in recent years.
- ** The Montana Indian population is increasing at an annual growth rate estimated to be 2.5% (the Montana Indian birth rate is more than 38% per 1,000 population as compared to less than 20% for the rest of Montana).

These facts suggest that bold and innovative approaches are needed if Montana Indians are to improve their lives without limitations, disabilities and indignities. The American system allows many cultures and traditions to flourish in harmony, and Montana must now provide new opportunities for Indians to lead useful and prosperous lives in an Indian environment...and to do this without the necessity of the Indians rejecting their culture, traditions and life-styles as the price of progress into a better life. Montana State University, as a land-grant university, can make a quantum contribution in this direction.

2. PROBLEM

A common expression of Indian and non-Indian alike is that "education" remains one of the most critical needs of the American Indian. MSU shares this premise...but it should be noted that the traditional educational programs in Montana have not materially affected nor improved the reservation Indian situations. Even the regrettably few Indians that have acquired an education generally have not returned to the reservation, nor have they pursued careers that cause them to become meaningfully involved in Montana Indian affairs toward improving reservation situations. Thus, there has been and continues to be a "brain drain" on Montana Indian reservations to the extent that it is difficult to relate education processes to Indian situations and improve them...and to do this without compromising the cultural and traditional life-styles to be found on the majority of the reservations. A continuing sensitivity to Montana Indian situations is needed in the educational processes of Montana educational systems,

including those at MSU. Conversely, the confidence of Montana Indian communities is needed if educational programs are to be accepted by the Indians themselves.

Education of Montana Indians has been inexcusably low, with less than 200 college students from all Montana Indian reservations in a recent academic year against an estimated 4,000 Indian youth of college age in the state. Even those relatively few Indian students who gain an education are obliged to seek opportunity away from the reservations, thereby abandoning Indian culture and tribal traditions. At the same time, Indian tribes decry the low education profiles of reservation Indians and the lack of understanding of reservation situations by the broader, non-reservation community, including the educational institutions. Educated Indians, knowledgeable in traditional Indian life-ways, are sorely needed to relate contemporary methods and processes with reservation life-styles. It is tragic that the skills of educated Indians are lost to reservation communities, but it is even more tragic that reservation Indians are not continually exposed to the thinking and skills of educated Indians who are also conversant with the folk-ways, traditions and mores of those on the reservation.

The problem grows in large measure out of the failure of institutions of higher education in Montana to provide Indians with an education within the context of their own culture as well as within that of the wider American culture. Living experiences gained on the reservation and Indian life-ways have not been meaningfully included in the educational processes of Indian students, although Indians have been in the backyard of Montana

since statehood. Nor have they been included in the education of the non-Indians so as to provide within the state a sympathetic understanding of the Indians and their problems.

Montana State University is no exception to this situation. It has previously included Indian affairs in its programs only in isolated instances and frequently in an empiric fashion, thereby unwittingly contributing to the "brain drain" from Montana reservations. It follows that MSU is not now making the valuable and comprehensive contribution it can make toward improving the education and lives of Montana Indians. For example, the Cooperative Extension Service has had a long period of direct involvement in Indian areas. In spite of this, Extension personnel feel that the twelve extension agents now working with Montana Indian communities need an improved working relationship with Montana Indian leaders. There is a continuing and serious lack of communication between tribal leadership and the Extension Service, thence the University. Because of this, and similar examples, there is a tragic loss of the knowledge and talents of educated people, particularly the educated Indian to reservations and the nation as well. This loss is primarily to the reservation because valuable resources are not available to aid in resolving the long standing problems of the American Indian. This loss is even more critical to Montana State University because its programs as a land-grant institution are not familiar to the Indian community. Thus, MSU's efforts are not accepted with trust and confidence by the Montana Indians.

3. PROPOSED PROGRAM

Montana State University will establish an American Indian Studies Program aimed primarily toward making MSU educational processes more

relevant and meaningful to Montana Indians. This will be done through the participation of reservation Indians in the on-going programs of the university, both on campus and on the reservations. Indian persons with appropriate backgrounds will lecture, advise, and consult with MSU students and staff on campus in order that a better insight into the reservation traditions and attitudes may be gained. The same persons will serve as consultants to staff members and tribal officials engaged in educational programs on the reservations. In this manner, Indian people from the reservations will be used to help find meaningful ways to relate education and educational resources to reservation situations. Indian students attending the university will find new purposes, not only in gaining an education, but also in relating their educational experiences to the needs of the reservation. It will thus be easier to harness the talents of educated Indians toward reservation development, retaining tribal traditions and at the same time building bridges to the social, economic and political islands that are now the Indian reservations of Montana. The trust and confidence of the Indians will be gained by MSU, and innovative measures will be supported by Indians themselves, even when these measures are provided through non-reservation Indians and non-Indians.

Montana State University, as a land-grant institution, is in a unique position to help develop reservation resources through its programs in resident instruction, research and extension. It can store, preserve and help up-date tribal customs, practices and traditions. This will be done through a closer working relationship with the Indian tribes and students from Montana Indian reservations. Indian students will relate their life

experiences to the education they gain at MSU, and the reverse. Indian representatives will be involved in the MSU processes and educational programs on campus and on the reservations. MSU will reorganize on-going programs, develop new ones and involve Indians in them in order that the education processes of the institution will be more relevant and responsive to the unique and long-standing Indian situations to be found in Montana.

MSU will become a clearing house for studies of Montana Indians, but more important it will become a source of information, data and expertise for Montana Indians on national, state and local situations, leading from the relationships established through the Indian Studies Program. MSU will become a partner with Indians in the development of reservation resources, pin-pointing needed studies and research.

4. OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

Through the American Indian Studies Program, Montana Indians will be offered opportunities to make educational processes more relevant to their needs and to relate more closely to Montana State University as a land-grant institution. They will, through this relationship, be able to make more intelligent choices in the development of their human and natural resources. More specifically, the program will seek to:

1. provide opportunities for the Indians in Montana to more fully utilize the resources of their land-grant university;
2. extend to young Indian students an opportunity to gain a formal university education without being divorced from the cultures and life-styles of their Indian communities;
3. develop an increased sensitivity to Montana Indian situations on the part of the university and of the general public in order to accelerate the integration of the Indian communities into the broader Montana community without compromising the life-ways of those communities;

4. afford Indian students a better appreciation of tribal cultures and an opportunity to share this appreciation with all students in order that future generations of Montanans will not be burdened by the considerable misunderstandings and separation of communities that is frequently found today;
5. increase the available skills for human and natural resource development on the reservations and in this manner reduce the brain-drain of educated Indians from those reservations;
6. create patterns of instruction and interaction between communities and Montana State University which may be extended to other segments of the state's population.

The philosophy governing the American Indian Studies Program is not that of assimilating the Indian communities into the broader segments of Montana society, nor that of segregating them further through a greater appreciation of their unique situations and backgrounds. Rather, Montana State University will assist them in gaining a better perspective on their situations and aid them in arriving at more studied considerations of the available alternatives.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSED PROGRAM

Indian participation and involvement will be emphasized in developing the Indian Studies Program at MSU. Areas of Indian interest will be the basis for beginning that portion of studies that will embrace tribal situations and circumstances. To establish and maintain the Indian Studies Program, individual tribal participation will be the key element.

Specifically, it is proposed that:

1. MSU will work with Montana Indian tribes,
to establish personal liaison with tribes,
to gain assistance of tribes in building up specific knowledge about tribes,

to help determine opportunities for study and research,
to develop a multi-tribe forum to review MSU-Indian programs,
to recruit students,
to develop curricula and correlate Indian and MSU interest in
modifying and upgrading programs,
to assist in economic and resource development.

2. The institution will interlace its educational programs with an awareness of relevant situations found on Montana Indian reservations.

Indian people will help orient students, particularly Indian students, toward relating their education and acquired skills to Montana Indian situations, increasing the impact of education on Montana reservations,

Modern techniques of the institution will be utilized to gather, store, and preserve tribal customs, histories, traditions and life-ways in order that their significance and utility may be taught to succeeding generations of Indians,

Unique reservation situations will be identified, first by tribal members, for study by the institution and its students; second, by Montana State University for further study and joint exploration in consultation with tribal members.

3. All students at MSU (approximate enrollment, 8,000 students) will have the opportunity to enrich their education through the Indian Studies Program by familiarizing them with ethnic and minority situations in a pragmatic and academic sense; students will be offered laboratory and field situations on Indian reservations to enlarge and enrich methods and techniques in all areas of study.

New procedures and practices will be devised to incorporate Indian Studies with graduate studies, advanced research and fellowship programs; Indian Studies as a minor and a baccalaureate major will be offered when Montana Indian tribes accept MSU's Indian Studies course offerings as relevant to Montana Indian situations and Indian areas generally, and

The American Indian Student Advising Program, which is in its fourth year at MSU, may be enriched and possibly extended. This program was instituted during the academic year, 1967-68, with a part-time faculty advisor. Through it, drop-out rates among

Indian students were reduced from over 80% before the initiation of the program to less than 25% in the third year. Moreover, many other MSU students who are graduates of small, rural Montana high schools also have inadequate preparation for higher education and face similar difficulties in adjusting to the academic scene. Consequently, the advising techniques of the Indian program may be extended to a larger clientele.

4. MSU will develop its capability to provide programs such as

Civil Service training for Indian affairs,

Training of teachers for intercultural service,

Tribal leadership courses,

Economic and resource development on the reservation,

Consultation to public and private sectors on Montana Indian problems,

Research in Indian areas.

5. MSU will coordinate the Indian Studies Program with other campuses within the State of Montana University System and other institutions of higher learning.

MSU will relate and coordinate its Indian Studies Program with similar programs on other campuses of the University system. There are now Indian Studies Programs at the University of Montana, Missoula and at Eastern Montana College, Billings. There are also Indian-related programs being developed on campuses outside the six campuses of the Montana University System; i.e., College of Great Falls, Great Falls and Rocky Mountain College, Billings. Continuing liaison and coordination will be maintained by MSU with these programs.

MSU will share and exchange programs, data, material and methods with other Indian Studies Program and related activities in Montana toward a dynamic and effective Indian program throughout the Montana system. Recruitment, counseling and instructional efforts will be shared with other institutions to gain the broadest and optimum impact upon Montana Indian situations, students and communities, as well as upon the broad Montana community.

6. REVISION OF CURRICULA TO ACCOMODATE INDIAN STUDIES

MSU curricula will be reviewed on a continuing basis in the light of tribal interests and preferences for those areas of tribal situations that

may be desired and suitable for inclusion in an effort to provide an Indian emphasis and awareness in the on-going programs and studies. MSU faculty and staff will work with Indian Studies personnel, including tribal representatives, to screen, evaluate and categorize course content toward identifying opportunities to include Indian situations in the on-going programs. Tribal desires and preferences will guide MSU staff and faculty toward developing methodology and techniques to implement Indian Studies on a phase-in basis with on-going courses.

Reservation Indians will aid instructors and professors in the compilation and development of instructional materials to complement classroom activity. Indian content of specific courses and activities will be immediately increased through the partnership participation of reservation Indians.

From this beginning, on-going courses will be reviewed and enlarged until new and separate courses are developed that will be identified as American Indian Studies courses, as discussed in the following sections.

7. UNIVERSITY CONSULTANTS: PHILOSOPHY

It is proposed that a representative of each of the Montana tribes, not necessarily educated but conversant with reservations, be invited to become involved in MSU activities in Indian Studies, both on and off campus. Thus, it will be possible to have "Indian experts" work with professors in specialized and general fields in relating methods and techniques of the institution to reservation situations. Students will become mindful that classic and professional approaches will need to be related to isolated Indian communities. The Indian representatives will provide these insights on campus, in the classrooms and in the field.

Non-Indians will gain an orientation to Indian situations during their educational process, opening up opportunities for further insights if desired. This desire for further work on Indian projects will be better accepted by Indian communities who will have become involved in MSU programs and acquainted with its methods. This confidence of the Indian community is essential if new approaches and innovations are to succeed.

Non-reservation Indians will be afforded the same opportunity as reservation Indian students to gain the acceptance which is often lacking when Indian communities become isolated from their Indian students while attending college. Additionally, non-reservation Indians who want to become better acquainted with tribal situations, traditions and cultures may do so on campus along with others in class situations. Thus, they will be spared the embarrassment of going to Indian communities and saying, "I wish to learn about my tribe, or about Indians", and be identified as a "non-practicing Indian" and with the indignities attendant upon such an identification. The presence of a tribal representative on campus will provide a calling card to reservations for students that will more adequately assure acceptance by the Indian community.

These representatives of each Montana tribe, whom we suggest be known as University Consultants, will provide MSU with resources that will facilitate a meaningful educational relationship with the Montana Indians. They will keep the Indians abreast of trends and tendencies through their involvement at MSU. They will also make it possible for MSU to maintain a viable relationship with the Indian communities.

8. UNIVERSITY CONSULTANTS: FUNCTION

There will be one consultant from each of the seven Montana Indian reservations. MSU will provide guidelines for the responsibilities, functions, duties and proposed tours of duty. These guidelines will be forwarded to each of the Montana Indian leaders in order that the tribes may screen and recommend tribal members believed to be suited for the role. Each of the tribes, and perhaps the landless Indians, will be asked to make recommendations from their members for the position of University Consultant. From these recommendations, MSU will appoint the consultant and pay the necessary and appropriate expenses of the position through the proposed Indian Studies Program.

The University Consultants, hereinafter referred to as Consultant, will be on the staff of the Coordinator for American Indian Studies, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana. The Coordinator is under the immediate supervision of the Director, Center for Intercultural Programs. The Director reports directly to the President of the University.

The Consultant will be under general and immediate supervision of the Coordinator of American Indian Studies, who is a Professor at the supervisory level or an Assistant Professor. Supervision will be in terms of general guidance in the areas of Indian studies that relate to broad involvement on campus and in the field. Immediate supervision will be given toward adapting specific tribal situations to MSU activities. Similarly, supervision will also be given in adapting MSU activities to specific tribal situations.

Although the Consultant will receive general and immediate supervision in his activities and duties, he will discharge his responsibility in a

manner that reflects the high quality of performance and dedication that is expected of all MSU staff, with considerable flexibility to accommodate tribal uniqueness, tradition, practices and expectations to provide optimum impact of the American Indian Studies Program with the tribe and with MSU. As the Consultant for his particular tribe, he will be the organic link between his tribe and MSU including, but not limited to resident instruction, research and extension activities. The following responsibilities will constitute some of his representative duties.

1. Consultant will work with MSU staff and faculty in specialized and general fields to relate methods and techniques of the institution to reservation situations. He will, in turn, relate reservation situations to MSU instructional programs. In this role, the Consultant will be responsible for providing a working liaison between MSU and the tribe, to keep both communities abreast of trends, tendencies and developments in a fashion that there is a mutual trust and confidence inherent in all activities between the university and the tribe.
2. Consultant will lecture, advise and work with MSU students and staff in order that a better insight into reservation traditions and attitudes may be gained.
3. He will serve as an advisor to Indian staff members and tribal officials engaged in educational programs on and off the reservation. He will help find effective ways for relating education and educational resources to reservation circumstances.
4. Consultant will be responsible for an authentic and accurate portrayal of tribal histories, customs, traditions and life-ways for inclusion in orientations, lessons for classrooms and as substantive materials for studies by MSU students and faculty. He will be responsible for assuring that MSU activities involving or impinging upon tribal areas of interest are acceptable to the tribe, and that the inclusion of tribal situations in MSU studies are consistent with tribal desires and intents.
5. Consultant will have some responsibility for the effective advising of students from his reservation who are also attending MSU. This effort will be effectively coordinated with the American Indian Student Advising Program at MSU. He may be required to keep abreast of the advising program at MSU as part

of his routine duties, including, but not limited to attending and participating in special orientation and advising sessions for Indian students. He will be required where necessary to carry this responsibility to the reservation, tribal and government officials and parents and guardians of students attending MSU.

6. Consultant will be responsible for coordinating MSU visits, consultations, meetings and other similar activities with his respective tribe. He will perform this liaison in a manner that reflects a viable and dynamic relationship between the tribe and the University.
7. Consultant will be periodically required to function as an advisor to local school board, committees, associations and other community interest groups to further the program of home-to-campus viability.
8. On campus, Consultant will serve on a Board of Indian Advisors, which board will review curricula, activities, projected activities and other areas germane to the Indian Studies Program. The Chairman of the Board of Indian Advisors will be the Professor of American Indian Studies, or in his absence the Assistant Professor, both of whom may assign other duties for the Consultant to perform on and off campus.

Role of Consultant in Curricular Revision

No separate curriculum of American Indian Studies will immediately be established at MSU. Rather, an Indian emphasis, an American Indian awareness, will be introduced into classes wherever appropriate. Indian Studies Programs will thus be developed primarily through Indian participation, rather than summarily being established by the university. Separate courses and a curricular program will then be established, if needed, to meet the expressed desires and needs of Montana Indians wherever practical. These will then be phased in with on-going programs. The Consultants will lecture in classes, serve as resource people in seminars, confer with faculty and students in order that tribal interests and situations may be related to campus programs. They will participate in many areas of instruction, but these will include agriculture, anthropology, art, architecture, economics,

education, history, sociology, speech and theatre.

With this participation, the Consultants will aid in the development and compiling of data and material for use in the study of Indian situations. This effort will be implemented into the on-going curricula on a phase-in basis. The Indian content in courses will be increased until enough material and data is gathered and appropriate methods are developed to offer a specific course in Indian studies that relates to a given area of study; i.e., Montana and General Indian History, Agriculture Among Montana Indians; Economic Development on Indian Reservations; Social Studies Relating to Montana Indians; Cultural Amenities of Montana Indians and other areas of MSU study as appropriate.

MSU faculty and staff will provide guidance and supervision as these courses are phased into the on-going curricula and in establishing separate courses for Indian Studies. It is proposed that there will be an Assistant Professor (Indian Studies) who will help provide leadership to the University Consultants in introducing Indian situations to on-going courses, inasmuch as there is no assurance that the Consultants will be conversant with teaching techniques nor of campus practices and procedures. The Assistant Professor will be of a background that reflects a broad and intimate knowledge of Montana Indian reservation situations as is the Professor of Indian Studies. Together, they will supervise a continuing and viable program in the classroom and in the field.

This approach will enable non-Indian and Indian students alike to become better acquainted with reservation problems and situations. It will enable the non-Indians to become more aware of the Indian communities within the state, of their traditions and aspirations; in short, to become more

aware of their uniqueness, of their distinctive cultures. It will enable them to become aware of the Indians own perception of Indian problems and the prerequisites for their solution. In this manner, there will develop in Montana a greater understanding of the Indian situations, both on and off the reservations. And there will develop a greater respect for the American Indian, a greater capacity for empathy on the part of both the non-Indians and the Indians. The isolation of the reservation will not be extended into the university.

Role on the Reservations

On the reservations, the Consultants will provide an organic liaison with the university, helping to improve communication with the tribal governing bodies. They will help keep reservation people abreast of MSU activities; they will encourage them to take advantage of MSU's facilities. They will advise and assist agricultural extension agents on the reservations in the development of more cooperative programs. They will improve the contacts for those agents with reservation people. Particularly, the Consultants will assure that Extension Service activities are brought to the attention of the tribal leaders and to the tribal membership at large. Through this role, they will provide a more dynamic communication link between the tribe and the Extension Service in order that Extension efforts support the priority programs of the tribe. It is hoped that in future years, the Extension Service on Indian reservations will less and less limit its efforts to agriculture and land-use programs, but expand them to support the broad and indigenous programs of the reservations.

The Consultants will advise tribal education committees as well as local school boards. In short, they will serve as ambassadors of goodwill

for the university, assist in the acceptance of MSU efforts by the Indian community, and increase sensitivity to Montana Indian situations in the educational processes. In this manner, the Consultants will encourage a sharing of ideas and experiences. This sharing, in turn, will make possible the inter-relating of Indian thinking with the thinking of the institution, its students and faculty. Thus, the combined brain-power of the institution will be coupled with the ever-broadening thinking of the Indian communities, all toward improving the Montana Indian situations.